

the Oakland PBA. He later went on to serve on the State PBA Executive Board. In 1996, he began a nearly 11-year tenure as President of the State PBA. Mike has dedicated his life to keeping the people of New Jersey safe, putting his life on the line and sacrificing so much on our behalf.

The PBA is the largest union of law enforcement officers in New Jersey, with more than 350 Locals representing more than 30,000 municipal, county, state, and Federal officers. These officers have benefited greatly from the hard work and dedication that Mike has given the PBA these last forty years.

Tonight, the members of the PBA and community leaders from all across New Jersey will be honoring Mike for his career of service. I join them in thanking Michael J. Madonna for demonstrating such tremendous commitment to the safety and well-being of New Jerseyans statewide. The Garden State is a better place because of the service of people like him.

REMEMBERING NICHOLAS
PALMIOTTO

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 15, 2007

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I bring to the attention of the House Mr. Nick Palmiotto, a dedicated soldier, a leader, a father, a husband, a member of my Service Academy Advisory Board and my constituent from Sterling, Virginia, who passed away at the age of 44 on October 6 after a valiant fight against leukemia.

It was an honor to have Nick serve as a member of my Academy Board which assists in the selection of nominees for military academies. As a 1984 graduate of the Naval Academy, Nick recognized the character and integrity that would enable young men and women to become leaders and heroes, much like himself. Nick was the embodiment of what it meant to be a soldier and a true gentleman.

Nick Palmiotto was born on November 18, 1962, in Mount Kisco, New York. After completing high school at the top of his class, Nick attended the Naval Academy and graduated 11th in his class. He was accepted at the prestigious Nuclear Power School and was commissioned as a nuclear power submariner. Shortly thereafter, however, Nick was medically retired from the Navy after learning of a blood disorder that would prevent him from serving at sea.

Upon leaving the Navy, Nick continued his involvement with the military as a defense contractor, developing many high-tech programs which enhanced operations training and helped to save the lives of many soldiers on the battlefield. During the final years of his career he served in support of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Nick was an asset to the community and he will be greatly missed by all those who knew and loved him, including his two children, Kyleigh and Chad, and his wife, Janelle, of 19 years. We send our condolences to his family and friends and salute Nick Palmiotto for his life of service to his country.

HONORING MS. JANE DECKER

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 15, 2007

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I rise, not only for myself, but also on behalf of Congress Members ANNA ESHOO and MIKE HONDA, to honor Ms. Jane Decker who is retiring after 35 years of dedicated and honorable service in county government.

The County of Santa Clara encompasses what is popularly known as Silicon Valley. While the rest of the nation may speak of "Googling" or "Podcasting" as tech tools, those of us lucky enough to live there tend to regard the companies who invented those terms as neighbors, employers and members of the community.

Known internationally as the high tech center of the universe, Santa Clara County's people are diverse. In addition to those who are highly successful, the County also encompasses individuals who face challenges from life. It is especially those persons upon whom County government focuses. Jane Decker, in her long service to the County, helped make sure that as the County's people celebrated success, they did not forget those who suffered, whether from poverty, health troubles or tragedies. Jane Decker, with her high degree of professionalism, ethics and knowledge helped craft the strategies that allowed the government of Santa Clara County to meet its challenges successfully.

While Congressman HONDA and I served on the County Board of Supervisors, we had the pleasure of working closely with Ms. Decker. We appreciated her outstanding service then. In the roles we three Members of Congress play, each of us can attest to the high degree of intelligence, caring and dedication Ms. Decker has exhibited in her professional life.

Jane Decker joined the County of Santa Clara in 1979 as the Director of Intergovernmental Relations. Because of her demonstrable leadership qualities, she has been promoted several times until her most recent post as Deputy County Executive.

In addition to her professional commitments, Jane Decker is a committed and valued volunteer for several prominent organizations in the County of Santa Clara.

We collectively extend our thanks to Ms. Decker for her years of excellent service and wish her the best upon her retirement and this new phase in her life. She has served the people of Santa Clara County well.

KINGWOOD CIVILIAN SERVES
ALONGSIDE THE TROOPS IN IRAQ

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 15, 2007

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, Linda Shafer Mehrmann, of Kingwood, Texas, has recently returned from Iraq not as a member of our armed forces but as a civilian contractor. She has spent much of her previous working career in fine jewelry sales. Instead of being in an air-conditioned building, surrounded by diamonds and jewels, two years ago she decided

to go to a land of sand and rocks in order to support our troops.

In 2004, she was attending a job expo with her brother who was trying to get a job as a truck driver in Iraq. While she was waiting for him, a job recruiter struck up a conversation with Mehrmann and described a unique company position that she might be interested in because of her outgoing personality.

After discussing the position further and thinking about it for a week, she decided to become a Morale Welfare and Recreation Coordinator in Iraq. Even though she was a civilian, she worked alongside our troops in Balad, Iraq working 12 hour days 7 days a week. Her duties included operating a recreation center and a workout area for the troops.

She wanted to go to Iraq during Christmas because she felt that this would be a difficult time for the troops that were away from their families. While the troops defended our Nation's freedom in war, Mehrmann's job was to lift their spirits and be an inspirational force in their lives in Iraq.

She boosted morale by writing what she called, "love notes" to the soldiers which were small pieces of hot pink paper with inspirational quotes typed on them from a quote book. The notes were placed in an aluminum coffee can for anyone to reach in and take. At first, the macho soldiers were reluctant to accept the love notes from the 54-year-old grandmother of four, but after the first person took one the popularity of the notes quickly took off.

Her quotes became a commodity on the base and were sought by many from privates up to generals. The quotes became so popular that other areas of the base created their own quote cans and quotes even started to appear on the menu board of the mess hall.

She also distributed stickers and match box cars to the troops which they greatly appreciated and sent to their children in the U.S. The small gifts made a huge impact in brightening the day of the troops and their children were glad to receive a gift from their faraway parent. Some of her other activities on the base included hosting pool tournaments, talent shows and Texas Hold'em tournaments at the recreation center.

When she returned to the U.S. after two years, Mehrmann decided to create a support group for those that have returned from Iraq and for those that have friends and family overseas. The group Combat Zone Here and There meets once a month in a local church in Kingwood so that servicemembers and their families can discuss their Iraq War experiences at home and abroad. When Mehrmann describes the activities that other civilians like her do to boost morale with the troops, she said it helps put the friends and family of our servicemembers at ease.

Her job as a civilian support member brought colorful life to troops living in a land of brown sand and rocks. She turned a gym for the troops into a comfortable home away from home. Mehrmann said that she didn't go to Iraq for political reasons, but to share random acts of kindness with the troops.

I salute Linda Shafer Mehrmann for her bravery and willingness to assist our Nation abroad during a time of war. Her courage and support of our troops is an inspiration to us all. And that's just the way it is.